

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Fact Sheet

The 1997 Refuge System Improvement Act – Key Provisions

An Organic Act for the National Wildlife Refuge System

- Provides a mission, policy direction, and management standards for the System

Established Broad National Policy for the Refuge System

- Each refuge shall be managed to fulfill the mission and its purposes
- Compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate use
- Compatible wildlife-dependent uses are the priority public uses of the System
- Compatible wildlife-dependent uses should be facilitated, subject to necessary restrictions

Directed the Secretary of the Interior to:

- Provide for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants within the System
- Ensure biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the System
- Plan and direct the continued growth of the System to meet the mission
- Carry out the mission of the System and purposes of each refuge; if conflict between, purposes takes priority
- Ensure coordination with adjacent landowners and the States
- Assist in the maintenance of adequate water quantity and quality for refuges; acquire water rights as needed
- Recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general public uses of the System
- Ensure that opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation are provided
- Ensure that wildlife-dependent recreation receive enhanced consideration over other uses of the System
- Provide increased opportunities for families to enjoy wildlife-dependent recreation
- Provide cooperation and coordination with military, other federal agencies and States

Provide Compatibility of Uses Standards and Procedures

- New or existed uses should not be permitted, renewed, or expanded unless compatible with the mission of the System or the purpose(s) of the refuge, and consistent with public safety
- Wildlife-dependent uses may be authorized when compatible and not inconsistent with public safety
- The Secretary shall issue regulations for compatibility determinations

Planning

- Each unit of the Refuge System shall have a Comprehensive Conservation Plan completed by 2013
- Planning should involve adjoining landowners, State conservation agencies, and the general public